(12) UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 312 792 (13) A

(43) Date of A Publication 05.11.1997

(21) Application No 9608809.1

(22) Date of Filing 30.04.1996

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(51) INT CL[6]
H05K 5/00 , H01H 9/02 , H04B 1/38

(52) UK CL (Edition O)
H1R RBL
H4J JL J37X

(56) Documents Cited
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US 5383091 A US 4836256 A

(58) Field of Search
UK CL (Edition O) H1R RBL RBM , H4J JL
INT CL[6] H01H 9/02 , H04B 1/38 , H04M 1/02 , H05K 5/00 7/00
Online: WPI

(54) Protective housing for electronic equipment

(57) A guard for protecting electronic equipment consists of an elastomeric container 1 in which the electronic equipment, such as a mobile telephone 9, is a snug fit and is provided with an aperture 5 on its top surface allowing access to the controls 10 of the equipment, and an aperture 11a in a side wall allowing an aerial to pass through the container. Other holes may be provided in for example the bottom of the container to allow easier insertion of the equipment into the container, or in a wall as at 13 to allow the passage of an infrared signal from a TV remote control.

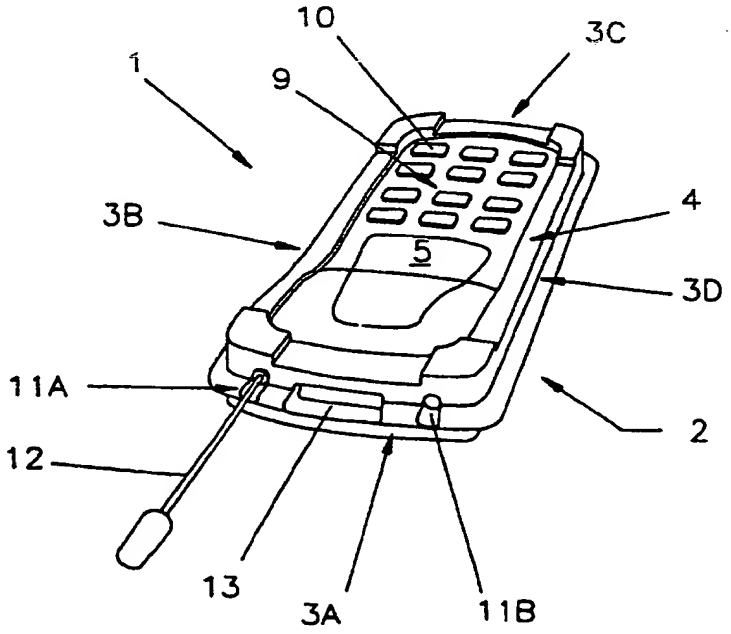

FIGURE 1

GB 2 312 792 A

The claims were filed later than the filing date within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1995

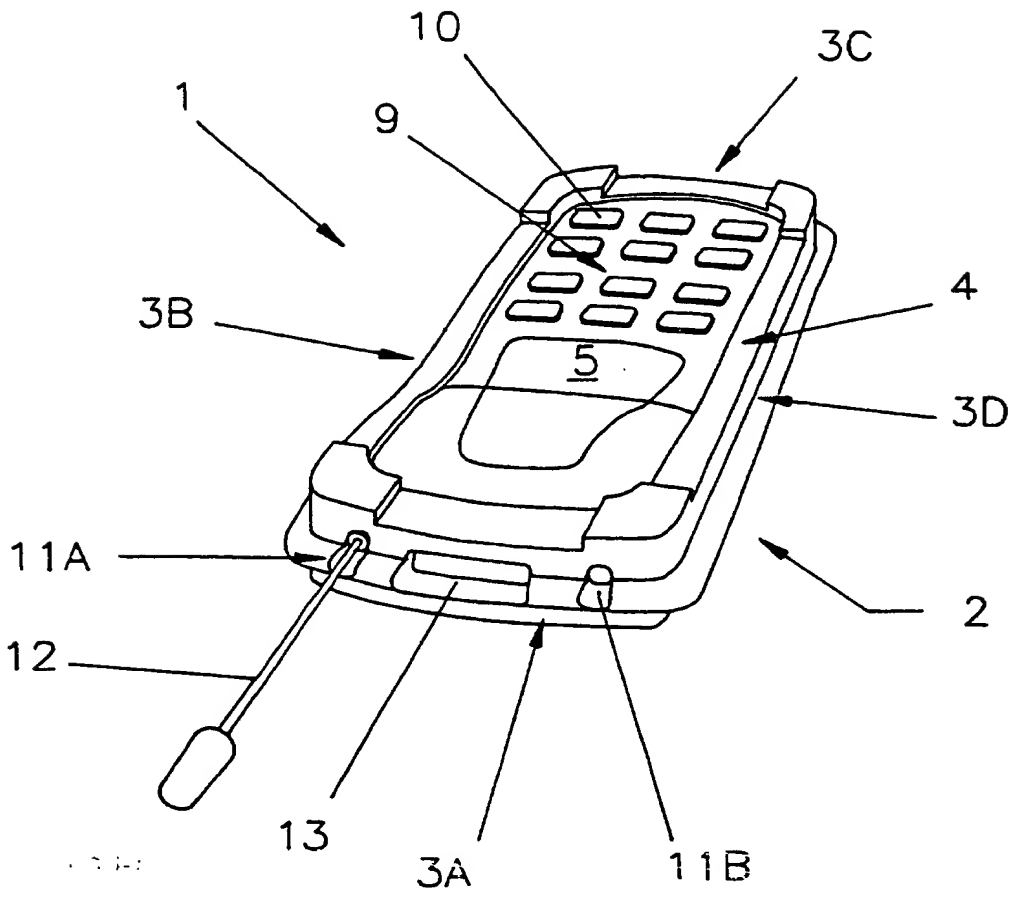

FIGURE 1

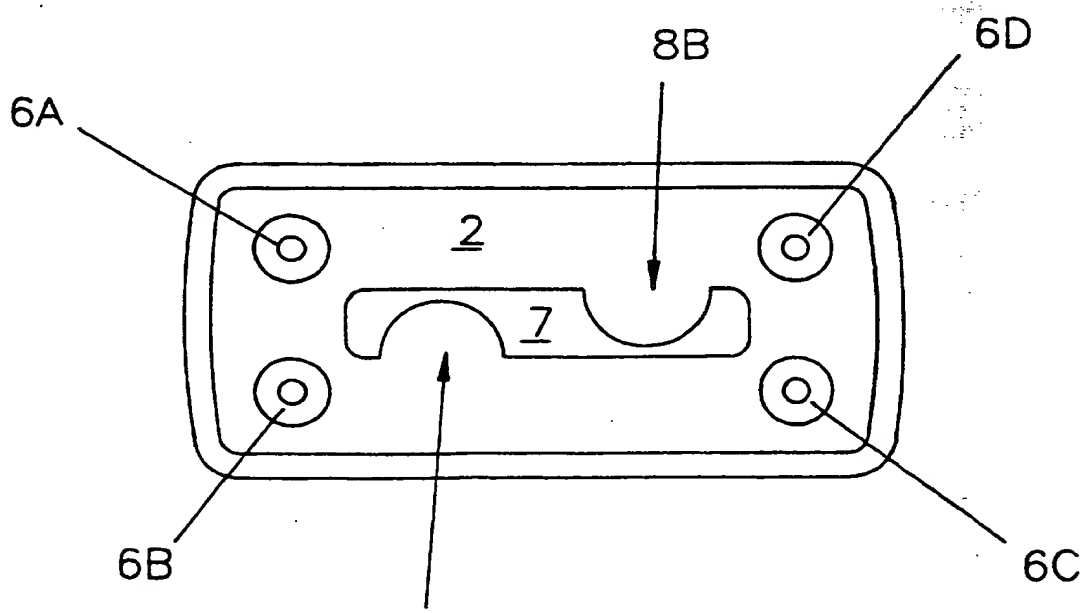

FIGURE 2

The present invention relates to a guard for protecting electronic equipment such as mobile telephones and remote control handsets.

Most domestic electronic equipment such as televisions, video recorders, and Hi-fi systems are operated now by remote control handsets. These handsets are made from relatively thin plastics material and can easily break if dropped. The handsets are also relatively thin and smooth on the surface and can easily be lost temporarily by sliding into cracks in or under the cushions of the upholstery of chairs or sofas. They are usually black in colour and are not especially visible. Once lost or broken, the piece of electronic equipment which each handset operates is often rendered inoperable. Mobile telephones are also prone to the same problems of breakage and loss. In many cases mobile telephones are more susceptible to breakage as they are taken outside the house and can be damaged during transport, such as sliding of the top of a car dashboard.

The invention seeks to provide a guard which helps protect and prevent temporary loss of such electronic equipment.

The present invention provides a guard for protecting electronic equipment comprising a container of stretchy and/or resilient material such as an elastomer, said container having a aperture through which the electronic equipment can pass to place it inside the container and

through which the controls of the electronic equipment can be operated, and at least one pad on the container to help prevent the container from sliding on a surface on which it is placed.

Preferably the container has a generally rectangular floor, four side walls extending from the floor, and a face panel spaced from the floor by the walls in which is formed the aperture.

Preferably the or each pad is formed on the side of the floor remote from the panel, and the or each pad may be a suction pad.

Preferably the container is formed into a single component.

The floor may include a cut-out portion to help the container to stretch when inserting the electronic equipment through the aperture.

One or more side walls may include apertures through which an aerial or electromagnetic signal can pass from the electronic equipment.

The invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of a mobile telephone in a guard of the invention, and

Figure 2 shows a plan view of the base of the guard of Figure 1.

Referring to Figure 1 there is shown a guard in the form of a container 1 formed from stretchy plastics or rubber material such as an elastomer.

The underside of the container as shown in the drawing has a generally rectangular floor 2 . Extending from the floor 2 are four side walls 3a,3b,3c,3d. A face panel 4 includes a large generally rectangular aperture 5.

Referring to Figure 2, on the side of the floor 2 remote from face panel 4 are four suction pads 6a,6b,6c,6d. Also the floor 2 includes a cut out 7 which forms two semi-circular flaps 8a,8b.

Preferably the container is formed into a single component, moulded in one piece, or in two pieces brought together.

The container is fabricated to have an internal dimension just smaller than the external dimensions of a piece of electronic equipment such as a mobile telephone 9 (Figure 1). In use of the guard, the telephone is inserted through the aperture 5 by stretching the container so that the container fits around the equipment. The aperture 5 allows the equipment to be operated such as the pressing of the telephone buttons 10, but the panel 4 is just proud of the

surface of the equipment to protect it.

The cut out portion 7 in the floor 2 helps the container to stretch, but the flaps 8a,8b help to cover and protect the equipment.

Apertures 11a,11b may be provided in the wall 3a through which aerial 12 can extend. Instead of the guard of the invention being used for mobile telephones as shown, it could be used for remote control handsets or other electronic devices. In this respect a slot 13 may be provided in wall 3a through which electromagnetic signals (e.g. infrared) can pass such as emitted by remote control handsets.

If the equipment is dropped on the floor, the rubber-like qualities of the container will absorb the shock so preventing damage to the equipment. Such rubber-like qualities also make the container less slippery than the usual smooth surface of the casing of the equipment, so the equipment is less likely to slip into upholstery cracks or under cushions. The pads enable the equipment to be secured to a smooth surface such as a table top or car dashboard.

If desired the container can be made of a bright colour to make it visible.

The guard could be a different shape to that shown to accommodate different shapes of

equipment and could have different types and numbers of pads to the suction pads shown, e.g friction pads or pads of Velcro (trade mark).

Further modifications will be apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the present invention.

CLAIMS

1. A guard for protecting electronic equipment comprising a container of stretchy and/or resilient material such as an elastomer, said container having an aperture through which the electronic equipment can pass to place it inside the container and through which the controls of the electronic equipment can be operated.

2. A guard as claimed in claim 1, in which the container has a generally rectangular floor, four side walls extending from the floor, and a face panel spaced from the floor by the walls and in which is formed the aperture.

3. A guard as claimed in claim1 or claim 2, in which at least one pad is provided on the container to help prevent the container from sliding on a surface on which it is placed.

4. A guard as claimed in claim 3, in which the or each pad is formed on the side of the floor remote from the panel, and the or each pad is a suction pad.

5. A guard as claimed in any preceeding claim, in which the container is formed as a single component.

6. A guard as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the floor includes a cut-out portion to help the container to stretch when inserting the electronic equipment through the aperture.

7. A guard as claimed in any preceding claim, in which one or more side walls are provided with an aperture through which an aerial or electromagnetic signal can pass from the electronic equipment.

8. A guard for protecting electronic equipment substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawings.